

ROLE OF AZATHIOPRINE AS A STEROID SPARING AGENT IN TYPE 2 LEPROSY REACTION

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Type 2 leprosy reaction is a type 3 hypersensitivity reaction affecting almost all the organs. It most commonly presents as erythema nodosum and has a protracted course with recurrence. The treatment of choice is steroids and the long term use of steroids result in adverse effects.

Aim: To determine the role of steroid sparing effect of azathioprine in type 2 leprosy reaction.

Method: An interventional study on 40 type 2 leprosy reaction patients on steroids was conducted by adding azathioprine and following up.

Results: Type 2 leprosy reaction was more common in males and 30-40 years age group. The onset of type 2 reaction was more common after starting multi drug therapy for leprosy and commonly after 6months-1 year of therapy. The recurrent episodes lasted for more than 2 years. After adding azathioprine, many patients continued to take steroid but at a lower dose than baseline. The response to azathioprine was better among new cases of type 2 reaction than recurrent cases and those who were on multidrug therapy than who had completed multidrug therapy.

Conclusion: Azathioprine can be an effective steroid sparing agent in type 2 leprosy reaction if started at first episode of the reaction along with steroid.

KEY WORDS:

Type 2 leprosy reaction

Erythema nodosum leprosum

Azathioprine

Steroid sparing agent